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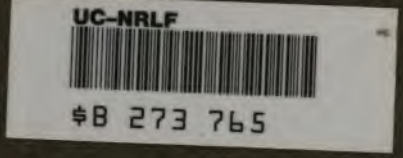

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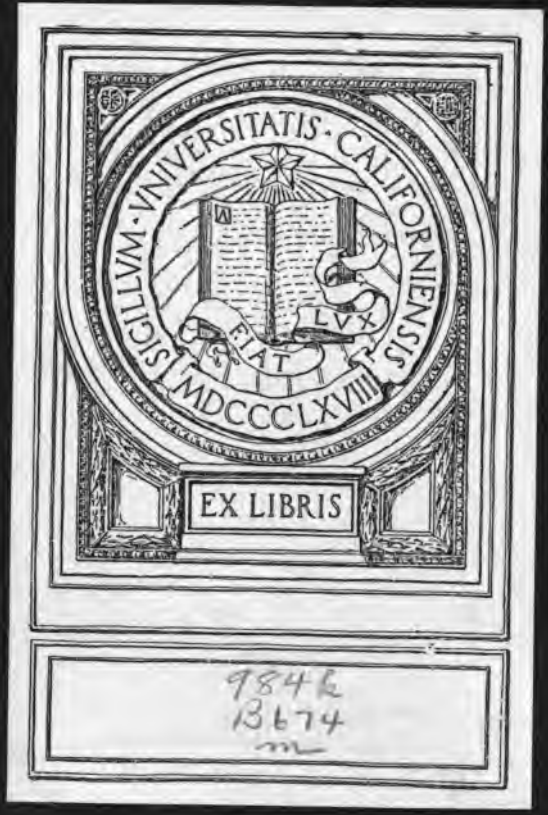

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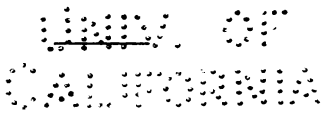
Methods of Training Social Workers



By EMORY S. BOGARDUS

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Methods of Training Social Workers

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Methods of Training Social Workers

By Emory S. Bogardus

1. **Social work as a profession.** Social work is tending toward the rank of law, medicine, and the other established professions, all of which passed through a preliminary stage similar to that which social work is now experiencing. Several years ago (1916) social workers themselves were surprised when the report on positions in social work by Edward T. Devine and Mary Van Kleeck was published, showing that there were at least 4,000 paid social workers at that time in New York City alone, 1,200 of whom being men; that there were in New York City twenty-one organizations paying salaries of $5,000 or more a year for social workers; and that salaries ranged up to $10,000 a year.

Social work has suffered from the fact that almost anyone with a little zeal and leisure could qualify. Consequently social welfare activities have often been directed by persons who were ill-trained or not trained at all; who had a single idea or plan which they were sure would transform the world; who primarily sought flattery and adulation; or who gave their time without remuneration and hence could claim exemption from observing the standard rules of professional social work procedure. Social welfare agencies are still directed oftentimes by persons who are chiefly self-trained, who scorn "book learning," and who are certain that their own experiences during a term of years are sufficient guides.

Social work as a profession is emerging from its period of youth—a period similar to that of the legal profession when ambitious young men "read law" in offices and shunned the newly organized law schools. Schools for training social workers have developed in recent years until now training facilities may be found in nearly all the larger colleges and universities, as well as in independent institutions, such as the New York School of Social Work.

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2. **Three purposes in training social workers.** (a) Social work is in need of receiving professional recognition. It is characterized by complex problems; it deals with the most serious phases of life; it has far-reaching, permanent results—in other words, it has all the essentials of a profession, except full standing. It is denied complete professional recognition because its representatives have not as a class sought thorough training.

Social welfare agencies from the standpoint of efficiency suffer greatly because of ill-trained workers. But through the activities of training schools for social workers, social welfare institutions are able to transform their official personnel from a combination of paid but self-trained individuals and untrained irregular volunteers to an integrated group of paid, thoroughly trained workers, assisted by seriously-minded young people who are rendering volunteer service under the joint direction of trained social workers and the supervisors of a school of social work, and who are in preparation for a life work.

(b) The main forms of social field work give students in sociology one of the best possible introductions to an understanding of the problems of societary life. The student of sociology who supplements his classroom work with social field work places himself in a strategic position with reference to securing an understanding of what is actually taking place in human society. Classroom discussion by itself is sometimes unfortunately remote from real life. Class or group discussion of social problems, carried on *pari passu* with daily contacts with the phases of societary life that are under discussion afford ideal bases for learning. Such opportunities for college students are usually few; almost all students are compelled to study books rather than life. Training courses in social work, however, afford a combination of sociological discussion and social work activity which is unusually stimulating and conducive to student development.

(c) A social work training course gives the beginner the experience which he must have if he is to reach a professional rank. Volunteer social work under the joint supervision of a training school and of welfare institutions introduces the volunteer by graduated steps to an understanding of, and an ability to handle, the problems of professional social work. The path-

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way is made clear and the first part of the journey is carefully directed, while at the same time the beginner is to an increasing degree put upon his initiative.

3. **Co-operative nature of training social workers.** The training of social workers is a co-operative undertaking, including four factors: the social agencies, the incapacitated, the school for social workers, and volunteer workers. Successful results depend upon a thorough understanding of the entire process by, and a *bona fide* participation on the part of, all the people who are involved. If any one of the four leading classes of persons who are concerned fail to function properly in the situation or to be governed at all times by an appreciation of the problems which are faced by the other parties to the tacit agreement, then the entire plan fails. The main distinction between the work of the volunteer and the regular social worker may be emphasized here. The regular worker should be a specialist doing technical work. The volunteer is in training and subject to be called on to do any one of a variety of things, including the making of visits and supplying the personal contacts which the regular worker is too busy to make.

(a) A factor of prime importance is the social welfare agency which offers to make a place on its staff for the volunteer worker. The agencies which are best equipped to train volunteers have often had bitter experiences in this connection. The volunteer frequently has an unattractive reputation. Since he is working without pay, he often objects to the routine which the regular worker must meet. The volunteer may break an appointment to take charge of a class or club with too little compunction. He may fail to meet these engagements without offering an explanation. Occasionally he may telephone to the agency at the last minute that he cannot come because of some engagement which from the standpoint of the agency is trivial. For example, the volunteer who telephoned the agency that she could not meet her regular appointment because of "an afternoon tea," neglected to consider how foolish such an excuse appeared in the eyes of the agency's superintendent. The volunteer as a class is often viewed unfavorably by welfare agencies because some volunteers have lost interest in a specific type of social work in two or three months' time. Other volunteers when trusted with keeping a portion of an institution's records have proved inaccurate. The volunteer may find

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the name of a friend or of the son of a prominent man in an institution's record books, and forget that all data of this kind are confidential. The volunteer is prone to criticize many things about social welfare institutions, especially before he has had time to acquaint himself with all the problems that the institution faces.

The volunteer, therefore, must keep in mind the unfortunate experiences which social agencies have had with persons of his type. He must subject himself willingly and pleasantly to the same routine as the paid worker. He must take special pains to meet all appointments regularly and to develop a reputation of dependability and seriousness, and he must finish what he undertakes even though unpleasant circumstances arise. In all his relations with the specific welfare agency, he must try to play the part of an "insider" in a natural, trustworthy, confidential way or else he may find himself rated and treated as an "outsider."

(b) The successful volunteer social worker is quick to obtain the point of view of the person who is being aided. The volunteer must know people; he must understand why they are in difficulty, without always asking why. He must grasp not only the attitude of the person who is in trouble and why he is in trouble, but also his probable sensitiveness regarding his condition. The wise volunteer is careful not to embarrass a sensitive needy person; he takes some things for granted and moves forward with an air of hope and cheer, inspiring the temporarily defeated or incapacitated person to new ambitions and activities. Sometimes, however, the social worker deals with the pseudo-indigent and the needlessly thriftless. In these cases he will usually be justified in making an open analysis of causes, and in forcefully reprimanding the guilty party.

Sometimes the volunteer worker unconsciously commits the error of attracting undue attention to himself, perhaps by being queer in actions or dress, by not being neat, or by wearing clothes carelessly. A volunteer who is dressed in the apparel of the upper middle classes or the wealthy classes often turns the self-respecting indigent person against him. It is important to dress and act so that one's superior economic status will not be conspicuous in the eyes of the indigent. Even the needy judge social workers by their appearance. A costume which is normal in a well-to-do group may be considered ostentatious in

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a lower economic group. Neatness, good taste, common sense, simplicity, and inexpensiveness in dress make a favorable impression upon and command the confidence of the needy. Even the expensive limousine of the would-be social worker arouses envy in a tenement district, creates the spirit of unrest and Bolshevism, and throws social work into disrepute.

(c) The third partner in the training of social workers is the training school. Its functions are to define and maintain standards, to assist social welfare agencies in utilizing the services of volunteer workers to the best advantage, to help the volunteer over the most difficult places at the beginning of his training career, and to co-ordinate the activities of welfare agency, the volunteer worker, and the needy—to the constructive advantage of each and of society.

The training school also functions to encourage certain volunteer workers and to discourage others. It points out to the former how they may improve the quality of their work, and to the latter, how they do not possess all the fundamental characteristics for attaining success in social work.

Schools of social work are directing their attention to practice training, and to discussion classes, as well as to fundamental sociological backgrounds. The beginner will find the school of social work ready to give him all the direction that he needs in order that he may secure a scientific training; the school will also endeavor to keep his viewpoint sane, wholesome, and well balanced. As he learns of the many-sided nature of social work as a profession, he will perceive that he is entering a field of wide social usefulness as well as one which will develop his personality to its fullest limits.

(d) As the fourth element in the situation the volunteer worker is in many respects the most important. He must assume the attitude of a learner in his relations with the social agencies and the training school, and the attitude of a co-operator in his contacts with the incapacitated. He must be prepared to face the harsh phases of life without showing perturbation and to undertake the solution of new and difficult problems. His reward is great, for he comes to know people, in fact many fine people who are heroically fighting the battles of life; and by the right example or deed, he may help them over the rough places.

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Schools of social work have found that the best volunteer social workers are those between the ages of 21 and 35. A person under 21 years of age is usually not mature enough in judgment, and one past 35 often has habits which are so well established that they do not permit him to function well as a volunteer in training.

Normally the volunteer in social work should complete two years of foundational college subjects before he undertakes social case work. A proper knowledge of backgrounds is essential. The student must not specialize too soon. A positive degree of patience is required today for the laying of a foundation that will be adequate to the needs of a far-reaching career.

An acquaintance with biology and bacteriology is valuable to the social worker. The ability to speak a modern foreign language is useful. The study of history gives the social worker a proper perspective, and a knowledge of economics affords an appreciation of powerful material factors. Psychology, social psychology, and particularly sociology, offer a fundamental insight into mental processes and societary laws.

4. **Social group work.** Social group work is an important beginning point for volunteers. In its simpler forms it refers to conducting or directing clubs and classes in social settlements, recreation centers, or school centers, where large numbers of children may gather together after school hours. Then there are institutions, such as children's hospitals and orphans' homes, where children live under constant supervision, but who, because of the standardization of such supervision, need the special leadership attention that can be given by volunteer workers. Oftentimes it is impossible for the regular staff to give sufficient attention to the children as individuals or to them in small groups. Group work with children who come to settlements and other social and educational centers present a greater variety of opportunities—and problems—than do institutional children, in fact, nearly all the opportunities that the latter type does, and additional ones. For this reason the discussion here will be directed to group work in social settlements and similar institutions. Inasmuch as the beginning volunteer can work best with children and adolescents rather than with adults this discussion will be devoted largely to group work with the young. Within the limitations that have been defined group work for volunteers is of two kinds: (1) leadership

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activities, and (2) investigation work, which in turn is (a) of a psychological nature, and (b) of a sociological nature.

The person who essays to act as a leader of a group of lively settlement boys or girls must understand both the psychology of adolescence and of leadership, and also the sociology of social settlement neighborhoods. A good starting point for the volunteer worker is first to seek out the club's own leader and to establish a friendly and "chummy" contact with him. Whenever a dozen children gather together one or two individuals at once act as leaders, and if the same group meets together for even a few times one individual usually becomes the recognized leader. Through this individual the volunteer worker may find out the pet desires, personal problems, and idiosyncrasies of the club members. For periods of time he may work almost entirely through the club's natural leader, giving suggestions, and setting an example of dependableness, promptness, straightforwardness, openmindedness, and otherwise becoming a super-leader who by the indirect influence of an active participant may re-shape the attitudes and interests of all the club members. While the main activity of the club may consist of plays and games; or in the case of a class of girls, cooking or sewing; or in the case of adults, the study of English, yet in these instances the volunteer social worker may wield the greatest influence by setting the example of a true man among boys, or of a true woman among girls, and of a true American under all circumstances.

After the volunteer becomes acquainted with each member of his group, he may begin to visit each in his home, not as an inspector, but as a friend, helping to repair a broken bicycle, bringing flowers, or calling upon a sick parent. In these ways he secures new insights into the characteristics of his friends and discovers new methods of helpfulness. In these ways only he comes to know the members of his group—which is one of the essentials of the highest type of leadership. After the volunteer has established relationships of good will and confidence with his boys and girls, he is in a position to make an analysis either (a) of their psychological traits, or (b) of their social situations. In making psychological studies the volunteer must consult frequently the supervisor of field work, especially in the preparation of a schedule of a standard set of topics. A

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leader of a group of boys from twelve to fourteen years of age profitably followed this schedule:

1. Name .....
2. Address .....
3. Birthplace and date.....
4. Do you like school?.....Why?.....
   .....
5. Your favorite study.....
6. Your most difficult study.....
7. Your occupational ambition.....
   Why?.....
8. Your favorite amusement.....
   Why?.....
9. Your attitude toward religion.....
10. Attitude toward socialism.....
    .....

It is understood that the answers to these questions were not secured in a direct or categorical fashion, but indirectly in the regular group or class work, on hikes, and in a normal conversational way. The volunteer did not record the answers to the questions in the presence of the boys. In a reasonably short time he secured the answers to all the questions from all the boys, and had a considerable amount of data from which he worked out several tables and interesting graphs. When studies of this kind are based on schedules that can be used in a large number of groups, the results are not only enlightening but scientific and widely significant as well. Studies of this character possess some of the characteristics of case study. In the social type of study the leader uses a different form of schedule. For example, the following schedule served well the purposes of one leader who was interested in the home conditions of his boys:

1. Parents living.....Address.....
2. Parents living together.....
3. No. of brothers.....Sisters.....
   Ages .....
4. Parents own home.....No. of boarders.....
   No. of rooms.....Rent per mo.....
5. How long lived at present address.....
6. Bathtub .....Washing machine.....
   Electricity .....Auto .....Garden .....

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7. Condition plumbing .....
8. Piano .....Victrola .....Telephone .....
9. What newspapers, magazines taken regularly.....
.....
10. Discipline in home.....
11. Parents' attitude toward school.....
12. Toward religion .....
.....

The volunteer leader may make a community or neighborhood survey. In this event he may use the services of his group members to advantage, and give them a splendid training in the study of social conditions, asking them to draw or chart several specific city blocks. This work may easily become a fine co-operative undertaking. A map of this kind should show the location of the various buildings, indicating the purpose to which each is put, and the location of institutions, such as churches, amusement centers, schools, industries. This study may be used to provoke many interesting discussions concerning the improvements that are needed and the methods that may best be pursued in securing the improvement. This neighborhood study may become in reality a genuine social survey, and bring about permanent neighborhood improvements besides giving many individuals a new sense of social responsibility.

5. **Social case work.** The common form of social work is known as case work. The "case" may be either an individual or a family. The problems which are involved in certain instances are often far more complicated than the first examination indicates. The beginner needs to be very patient, resourceful, and willing to learn. He sometimes will find himself facing a situation behind which evil hides its stubborn face, or lurks with treacherous eyes. The social worker must be unusually versatile in his mental attitudes, moving about with a profound faith in human nature and with an hopeful, optimistic air, and yet at times he must be as wise as a serpent. He must know and understand the weaknesses of human nature, and at the same time be quick to see the constructive human elements which may be stimulated into effective action. He must be well versed in the principles of social psychology and be able to apply them accurately.

Before the volunteer actually begins case work, he may profitably study cases that have been written up; he may prescribe

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treatment as if he were dealing with actual individuals. By so doing he will develop an initial degree of self-confidence. If at the same time he has the advantage of supervised class discussion in this matter, he will be able to profit greatly in reading cases and prescribing "treatment."

6. **The group basis of case work.** At the outset of his work the volunteer should keep in mind one sociological principle perhaps above all others, namely, that the group is the basis of all individual life. By himself the individual is an abstraction; he would never have developed beyond the level of an idiot. He is group-made more than self-made. He is born as a helpless babe into the traditions of the family group and also of neighborhood, city or country, national and racial groups, and probably a religious group, and so on. As he grows he becomes a more or less active member of many of these groups. When he is mentally undeveloped he is continuously and fundamentally influenced in his mental viewpoints by the traditions of his family, play, school, church, and other face-to-face groups. Even as an adult he is usually unconscious of the deep influence of his occupational group upon his thinking, and may never become aware that he has acquired a preacher, a teacher, a farmer, a business or some other type of occupational mind.

To understand thoroughly a child and his problems it is necessary to know his family group, together with all the expressions of the many group traditions which are crystallized in it. In the same way an analysis of the child's play group and other groups sheds light on the child's desires, actions, and problems.

It is in a defective family group life particularly that are found nearly all the causes of personal and social maladjustments which the social worker is called upon to change. The family group as an institution needs to be mastered from all angles. The woman who goes as a friendly visitor should be skilled in household management, hygiene, and sanitation, as well as in matters of discipline, morals and religion. If she can show the housewife how to become an expert buyer, a dietetist, a budget maker, a better mother and wife, she will be rendering genuine service. If this prospect seems to make too many demands upon the limited experience of the volunteer, let the volunteer also keep in mind the splendid training for

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himself which this same prospect holds, as well as the opportunities for unselfish service.

7. **Face cards and case records.** Upon being assigned to a social welfare agency, the volunteer will usually begin by reading the case records, and studying face cards. At once he changes his status from an "outsider" to an "insider" and cooperates with the agency in keeping the facts on the case records as strictly confidential data. Any failure to maintain an attitude of perfect trust diminishes the volunteer's chances of success.

Case records are valuable for the deduction of principles. While each case necessarily varies from every other, yet cases fall into types. The volunteer will search for these type divisions not only with reference to the nature of the ailment but also regarding causes and methods of treatment. He will also search for the sequence between type causes, type ailments, and type treatments. The social worker of experience who has not had scientific training often fails to observe underlying relationships. The fullest success in case work involves a scientific insight into the relations between causes and effects.

In the study of case records the face card or specific schedule for securing the initial information is significant. The volunteer often takes the face card too lightly; he does not perceive its importance as an agent of standardization and efficiency. The face card includes general data, such as the facts concerning the address, age, incapacitation, and so forth; and a specific "narrative," giving the history of the case, together sometimes with a medical record, a finance record of aid given the incapacitated, and a treatment record. In complex cases it is customary to keep the narrative, medical record, and finance record on cards or schedules separate from the face card.

The variation in face cards is great—according to the variety of social work that is being done. One of the best ways to learn the meaning of a face card is to make one for each of several kinds of social work, for example, in listing the important facts concerning (1) orphan babies that are to be placed in foster homes; (2) delinquent boys; (3) mentally defective adolescents needing institutional care; (4) widowed mothers (with dependent children); (5) aged persons who have no money, and no relatives able to give them support; (6) persons incapacitated because of tuberculosis; (7) women convicted of

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immoral conduct; (8) the blind who are untrained and temporarily dependent; and other cases which the supervisor of field work may designate.

At this point the volunteer may be warned against a grave danger. The face card and similar records tend to reduce the incapacitated to mere "cases" and to de-humanize social work. Although the term "case" is convenient, yet the worker should use it as little as possible and keep in mind that the person in need is probably self-respecting, and is to be treated as a friend.

8. **The first interview.** The first interview is of far-reaching importance for many reasons. The needy person who is being interviewed is usually sensitive regarding his need. He commonly is possessed of self-respect. He regards the interviewer as an "outsider." The interviewer must create an atmosphere of confidence and become an "insider" or else the incapacitated person may receive adverse impressions that will be exceedingly difficult to overcome.

The volunteer must first determine what are the essential facts that he needs to know—it is at this point that the face card is of assistance. In seeking the answers to the questions which have been determined upon, the volunteer must make his approach in a simple, business-like way, without affectation. He must act normally, as one who is meeting an equal on an ordinary errand. His attitude will be represented by the question: In what ways can I be of help? In conducting the interview, he must seek to know the causal factors, the attitude of the mind of the incapacitated person, and moreover the reasons for the specific attitude of mind.

The place where the interview is held is significant. The presence of a third or fourth party is likely to be discomfiting, and to prevent the one interviewed from being entirely frank. The social worker may arrange for the interview to be held at the office of the welfare agency, although this plan is often impractical because it may advertise the need or situation of the incapacitated person. As a rule it is best to ask to see the needy person in his own home. The conference between two persons at a time and place where they will not be disturbed is usually the best procedure for adjusting difficulties. Circumstances, however, vary the conditions under which interviews may be held to the best advantage.

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The volunteer worker must be continuously on the alert for clues to new information and to facts that will ordinarily not be disclosed. The conditions in and about the home of the one interviewed often constitute decisive evidence—a point which indicates the superiority of the home interview over the office interview, even though the former makes heavy demands on the volunteer, such as street car travel, expenditure of extra time, and the possibility of not finding the party who is sought.

Note-taking at the first interview is to be avoided. It gives the impression of formalism, or that evidence is being secured which will be used against the person who is giving the facts. It may arouse unnecessary and damaging suspicions.

When visiting the home of an immigrant, the volunteer is at a disadvantage if he cannot speak the specific foreign language that is used. His alternative is to secure a child in the home to act as an interpreter—a plan which can often be effected by going first to the school in the district and through the principal or a teacher making the acquaintance of a child from the home in question. Through the school and the child a satisfactory *entree* can usually be made to what might otherwise be a closed home to the interviewer.

After establishing a degree of confidence and trust, and securing the necessary data, the social worker has not entirely succeeded unless when he goes away he leaves the needy family or individual in an improved frame of mind, and wishing the interviewer to return. The worker must avoid prolonged interviews; when his errand is accomplished he should leave promptly. Even if he is compelled to listen to tales of misfortune, he must remain master of the situation and courteously withdraw when opportunity affords.

An interesting and profitable exercise for a class of volunteers in training is to interview each other in turn—supposing a given case and a particular need. Then the supposition of need can be changed and the "interviewing" process be continued. The supervisor will suggest particular needs as bases for "interviews," and make suggestions regarding the strong and weak features of each "interview."

9. **The main investigation.** The main investigation whether taking place at the first interview (where the problem is simple) or at a later interview, or interviews, ordinarily follows the physician's procedure. The interviewer inquires about

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the conditions from the client himself. Although he has a definite list of questions in mind, he shifts his questioning as the facts and circumstances warrant. He does not take notes unless he is certain that note-taking will not create prejudice. He often must make at least a few notes as soon as he can do so privately, in order to keep from confusing the details of the various cases upon which he is working. Later, the data can be transferred to the face cards and record sheets.

The investigation may need to include evidence not only from the client but also from other members of the family, although relatives by marriage are often prejudiced against the client, and are unreliable. The teacher, the preacher, priest, or rabbi, the employer, the physician—these persons are usually able to throw considerable light on many complicated situations. Relatives can give an insight into family history and temperamental traits; professional observers are able to diagnose behavior. In the case of the child, the teacher can give a report on mental ability, health, school attendance, conduct, and similar matters. The investigation may require an examination of the certificate of birth, the baptismal record, the court records. The investigator will familiarize himself with the laws governing the type of institution or of work in the specific case.

The final test, however, is to see for one's self. The reports of other persons must be measured by one's own judgment in the light of all the facts which it is possible to assemble.

10. **Types of evidence.** In making investigations the volunteer should clearly define all the various types of evidence, know what constitutes a fact, and beware of biases, particularly of racial and religious prejudices. As already stated the best type of evidence is that which the investigator sees for himself. Testimonial evidence, or the statement of a reliable person of that which he knows to be a fact, is valuable. Hearsay evidence, or the statement of a person that he has heard this or that, is untrustworthy. Circumstantial evidence may well be treated cautiously. While a considerable mass of circumstantial evidence is often convincing, it is rarely conclusive. Rare indeed is the case that should be settled absolutely on circumstantial evidence alone.

A colored maid in Georgia was sent to prison for several years on circumstantial evidence to the effect that she had stolen a diamond ring. The circumstances were as follows: The

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lady of the house left her diamond ring on a bureau in the bedroom while the maid was cleaning the room. A few minutes later the lady returned for her ring—it was gone. No one had been in the bedroom in the meantime except the maid, who denied taking the ring. The circumstantial evidence was convincing and the maid was convicted, although stoutly maintaining her innocence. Three or four years later the house was being re-modeled, when a workman in the basement, noticing a sparkling object in the rubbish which he was removing, discovered a diamond ring with the initials of the lady of the house upon it—it was the alleged stolen ring. Within the ring was the skeleton of a mouse, which on the day when the ring disappeared evidently had run across the bureau and tried to crawl through the ring. With the ring around its body, the mouse had scampered to the basement. The ring caught upon some object and the mouse perished.

The investigator needs to guard himself against asking leading questions, that is, questions which suggest an answer that is desired. For example, the question, You weren't feeling well yesterday, were you? implies the answer that is wanted. The noncommittal question is better: Were you well or ill yesterday?

The investigator should also beware of making dogmatic judgments. He is in danger of concluding abruptly that a given person has tuberculosis and so express his opinion in his report. Since he is not a physician it would be safer for him to state: Mr. A. acts as if he had tuberculosis, or Mr. A. complains of lung trouble. The suspended judgment does not indicate an inactive mind, but rather an active mind searching for the whole truth.

Social evidence differs greatly from legal evidence—it is more complex, varied, and human, involving as a rule more psychological insight and sociological apperception. It deals with causes, tendencies, attitudes, behavior, and all types of social controls as well as with legal codes and regulations.

11. **The diagnosis.** After the main facts are gathered the diagnosis logically follows. Again the procedure is similar to that which the doctor pursues, who after securing the available information, diagnoses the ailment and arrives at a conclusion relative to the causes and the best method of treatment. The diagnosis which the social worker makes is based on a

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sociological background, and an analysis of the predicament, or the maladjustment. It is often necessary to make hypothesis after hypothesis, testing out each in turn until the correct interpretation is reached. Ordinarily not one cause is at the root of the predicament, but several. The social diagnostician should beware of being satisfied with finding a single determining cause; he must continue his diagnosis until he locates other causes or else establishes the non-existence of such. It is also necessary that he protect himself against a purely personal interpretation of causal elements; he may find it worth while to submit the leading facts to his fellow workers, seeking their diagnoses as a check against his own.

Methods of treatment depend on the results of diagnoses. A study of diagnoses shows that the needy fall into three main classes: (a) the physically handicapped, (b) the mentally handicapped, and (c) the socially handicapped. Each of these classes is composed of several important subdivisions, which will be indicated in the sections that follow.

12. **The treatment of the physically handicapped.** The physically handicapped include several classes of worthy individuals. As a rule the blind require specific trade training; they need to make specialized uses of their senses which are not impaired. This training should be based on their ability and activities previous to becoming blind; or if they were born blind, upon physical and psychical diagnoses of their potential abilities.

The cripple is usually a self-respecting person who is sensitive regarding his condition. Sometimes he may endeavor to ignore his crippled condition, asking to be regarded as a perfectly normal individual. His need is that of securing a special trade training, suitable to his physical condition.

The cripple who becomes a pseudo-beggar, sitting near a street corner and silently appealing to the passing crowds, is not only a pitiable object but a person who should be trained for a self-respecting occupation. He should not be allowed to prey upon the sympathies of the public. Even as a seller of pencils and shoestrings he is essentially a beggar. People buy of him not from immediate need, but from a sense of pity. Occasionally he is victimized by his relatives who, through the appeal which his condition makes to the sympathies of passers-by, are able to support not only him but themselves as well. A trade

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training would transform public mendicants into self-respecting, productive, and useful citizens. In removing crippled mendicants from the streets the social worker will find legal obstacles, and must act through legal channels. This work may be done best by the district attorney.

The indigent sick furnish a variety of problems to the social worker. In fact, the administering of adequate treatment to the indigent sick creates a special type of social worker, namely, the medical social worker, the hospital social worker, or the social service nurse. In these cases, a medical or nurse's training is useful. The physician, treating the worthy poor, is handicapped if he does not have a social work training. Likewise, the social worker in treating the indigent sick is at a disadvantage if he is lacking in medical knowledge or a nurse's training.

Training in medical social service varies greatly. There is the service that may be rendered within the hospital in removing as far as possible the causes of unnecessary worries of one kind and another on the part of patients who do not have friends who can attend to these matters. There is investigation work: to secure data concerning the social and economic status of the patient, to determine how far free medical care should be given, and to learn what the circumstances of the patient will be when he leaves the hospital. Very often a patient who has suffered from tuberculosis or a similar disease is discharged from the hospital or sanatorium as cured, but the beneficent healing is nullified by the fact that the person returns to overcrowded and unhealthy housing conditions—the same conditions which caused his original illness. In this type of situation the volunteer worker may render splendid service. Not only does he receive training in social investigation but he may be instrumental in safeguarding a discharged patient against unfavorable living conditions. A considerable amount of medical social service is preventive, and affords a training in case work that is unsurpassed in social helpfulness.

13. **The treatment of the mentally handicapped.** The treatment of the mentally incapacitated is unusually difficult and requires a special training in the psychological laboratory. It is necessary to determine first the nature of the mental incapacity, whether the individual is mentally deficient as in the case of the moron, the imbecile, or the idiot, or whether he is

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simply untrained. After these special analyses have been made, the difficulties of treatment begin. The care of the mentally incapacitated demands peculiar psychical insight, mature judgment, and special skill.

Mental incapacity is frequently coupled with vice, and hence the psychiatric worker must also be an expert in social pathology. As the terms mental backwardness and mental disturbance imply, the treatment will usually be educational. Hence a specific training in pedagogy as well as in psychology is valuable to the social worker in this field.

The treatment of the very young and of the very old who are mentally incapacitated, and of the insane, is ordinarily institutional. As a rule the volunteer in this type of work should be carefully selected, especially he who is to work with the insane and the mentally unbalanced who are aged.

The treatment of the mentally deficient in institutions consists of providing forms of work and play at which they may be made useful and happy. If the mentally deficient are cared for in private homes the treatment will require that the care-takers be instructed in the best educational methods. Psychiatric social work thus is highly specialized.

14. **The treatment of the socially handicapped.** The treatment of the socially incapacitated is difficult to analyze in a small compass because of the numberless forms of social incapacity. (a) The most common predicament which the social worker faces is the fatherless family. The treatment required is to help the mother and children to keep together, and to maintain as normal a family life as possible under the circumstances.

(b) Another phase of social incapacity is represented by neglected or dependent children. The best methods are those of keeping the family together, of finding foster parents, or providing the children with institutional care. One of the first things for the social worker to do is to learn whether the neglected or dependent child is necessarily neglected or dependent. Often there are relatives who will come to the aid of a child when they are located and their responsibilities are made plain.

In the case of the illegitimate child the social worker normally will leave him under the care of the mother, but compel the father, if he can be found, to pay a portion of the child's maintenance, or insist in many cases upon the marriage of the

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parents. When the mother is chronically immoral, the foster home or the institutional home will offer the best solution.

For the average orphan the foster home is superior to the institutional home. This rule holds true especially with reference to infants and young children. In regard to the older boy or girl who is past five or six years of age, it may be said that the individual's habits and reactions have become established to such an extent that it is difficult for him to fit into the life of a foster home, unless that home is very carefully selected, that is, unless there is a temperamental correlation between the child and the members of the foster home. The infant and the young child, however, can fit into a wisely selected foster home without creating insuperable difficulties. For such children the suitable foster home is more nearly normal than an institution where fifty, a hundred, or more children are kept together, where they eat at long tables, work in groups, and sleep in dormitories. While group training is excellent and essential, yet group training predominantly or almost exclusively does not fit a child for a life of individual responsibility.

The selecting of a proper foster home requires a twofold diagnosis: first, of the real and the potential traits of the child; and second, of the conditions in and surrounding the prospective home. The religious beliefs of the child, if he has such, or of his parents, will be respected in selecting a home. The relation of the child's temperament to that of the proposed parents and of the children that may already be members of the specific family, needs accurate equating. It is important that the parents possess sufficient patience to train a foster child. The ideals of the parents who wish to adopt a child require careful scrutiny, for they indicate whether the child will be trained constructively or not. The social conditions in the given neighborhood will have a fundamental influence upon the child, for good or ill. The playmates that the adopted child will have, more than any other factor except the foster parents themselves, will probably determine the future of the child.

During the probationary period before the adoption occurs, several visits to the home by a regular or volunteer worker are advisable. The worker must be quick to judge social situations, particularly the question of domestic harmony. He must obtain from the child who has been "placed," a genuine expression regarding his relationship to the home. He must observe

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whether or not the child has found congeniality. An answer to a specific question regarding this matter from either the child or the parents will rarely be conclusive, and hence the social worker must use a less definite method of approach. The worker may test his personal judgment by conferences with the public school teacher, the religious leader who visits in the home, and with other reliable persons.

The boarding school, as distinguished from the free home, combines both the institutional and individual treatment methods. The children are in boarding homes a part of the time and in their own homes the remainder of the time. The boarding home arrangement is a method of meeting temporarily a disturbed family life. The social worker needs to be an adept in adjusting the differences that sometimes arise between children, the boarding home authorities and the parent or parents. Often the worker is called upon to determine what concessions regarding the standard charges shall be made to worthy, but economically incapacitated mothers, or parents.

(c) Another variety of social incapacity is represented by delinquent children. These are usually cared for by juvenile protective associations, juvenile probation officers, juvenile halls or detention homes, and juvenile courts. The volunteer worker should familiarize himself with the laws of his state and community relating to delinquency, both of children and parents. He will need also to be an expert in moral education, in fact, a moral leader.

Truancy is a form of social incapacity that is closely related to delinquency and that may sometimes be a form of delinquency. Many cases of so-called truancy are caused by circumstances over which the truants have little control, such as sickness in the family, economic incapacity of parents, and similar factors. Parents are sometimes to blame, deliberately keeping the child out of school. Again, the child himself may maliciously play truant. He may have become an educational misfit through his own fault, the fault of the teacher, or of the educational system, and have developed a genuine dislike for school. He may be motivated chiefly by a strong desire to earn money, because some of the boys whom he knows are doing so. Obviously the social worker will prescribe treatment that will ferret out and remove causes. The best methods are adjustive, educational, and preventive.

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(d) The homeless comprise another large group of the socially incapacitated. A classification based on degree of dependency will be used here. (1) There are the homeless who are dependent for a short time only, and who will find in a temporary loan and in assistance in getting employment the only aid they need. (2) The homeless who are habitually dependent usually need occupational training. Under direction they may become economically self-supporting. (3) The homeless who are economically helpless require institutional care.

(e) The alcoholic are adults who have been enslaved for years by a vicious habit. This type of the socially handicapped is fortunately decreasing in number. Institutional care is necessary.

(f) Children of immigrants often lose contact with parental traditions before becoming truly adjusted to the conditions of our country. The treatment is largely that of educating the immigrant parents *pari passu* with their children in American ways, and especially in the use of the English language. Adult immigrants need a sympathetic Americanization treatment. These needs may be met in part by classes in the study of English, hygiene, household management, civics. Adult immigrant women need the services of home teachers, who in going from home to home carry new and useful ideas, American ideals, and constitute a never-ending source of inspiration to better and larger living. The field of social work that is represented by home teacher training, and Americanization training is developing a technique of its own. The treatment is educational. The successful Americanization worker should be a worthy teacher, and acquainted with the meaning of American ideals, with the cultural backgrounds of the various racial groups, and with methods of teaching English and civics to people of a foreign tongue.

(g) In recent years the soldier and sailor home service of the Red Cross has become prominent. This work possesses a peculiarly patriotic appeal; it attracted at one time large numbers of persons whose superficial interest was ephemeral. The treatment includes making economic adjustments, domestic adjustments, and especially educational adjustments. Vocational rehabilitation is vital in the case of the soldiers and sailors who are crippled or incapacitated for life.

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15. **The inspirational element in treatment.** The best form of treatment in almost all case work is to give the incapacitated a contact with a rich, sympathetic, understanding personality. The attitude of mind and heart of the social worker toward his work is decisive. The worker who breathes a degree of self-importance and superiority, who has become calloused, who is moved by a narrow zeal, who seeks self-glorification and public acclaim—hinders the advancement of social work as a profession. He who possesses a well-developed and balanced personality, who strives continuously to understand people and their problems, who seeks new methods of procedure, who exemplifies in his person broad moral convictions and religious ideals—he is one of the world's greatest benefactors.

Oftentimes the only treatment possible is to "soften" the harshness of the environmental conditions. Sometimes the best treatment is to stimulate the individual who is in need to greater initiative and resourcefulness, and encourage him to take hold of life with new hope and determination. Since no standard treatment can be set forth, the volunteer worker will cultivate versatility. In and through the multiform opportunities in social work the personality of the volunteer will become richer, and increasingly inspiring and useful.

16. **Record keeping.** Record keeping is a summation of social case work. It begins with the face card and schedule and ends with a succinct, complete statement of treatment and of resultant conditions. After the novelty of the situation disappears the volunteer may fall into the easy habit of "trusting" his memory. Even social agencies sometimes have no adequate system of record keeping. There is no remedy for slip-shod social work except a knowledge of the best scientific procedure and a determination to follow this procedure. The reports which the volunteer submits concerning his work will indicate to a degree his fitness for continuing in social work. The making of these first reports represents the beginning of worthy or unworthy habits. The report should be written carefully, according to a logical plan; it should present facts as far as possible rather than the worker's opinion. It usually will not follow a diary form, in which descriptions are given in chronological order. It will be analytical, (1) describing behavior, (2) showing needs, and (3) indicating possible treatment.

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Where the face cards or other forms of a specific agency seem inadequate the volunteer may suggest changes, being certain that there is a need for changes, and also, testing the new proposals in order to be sure that they are worth while. Where methods have not been developed by the agency in order to meet new situations that have arisen, the volunteer as he gains in experience will have opportunity to do pioneer work of importance.

Record keeping has a research significance. An inventory of the work of a welfare agency includes a thorough analysis of the social records. Very few agencies have such inventories made regularly if at all, and yet if scientific methods of record keeping have been used, studies of this character are invaluable. They afford comparative observations, which indicate general trends. Under the direction of a trained social worker the volunteer may secure useful training in analyzing the social data which the records contain, in making tables, plotting curves, and making graphs, and in transforming an institution's social facts into valuable generalizations. This type of training leads into the field of the research sociologist.

17. **A knowledge of social agencies.** A knowledge of the social agencies in the community in addition to the one in which the volunteer at a specific time is working is essential. The volunteer needs to know the various city and county welfare agencies and the supervisory welfare bodies of the state. He should know the degree of efficiency and relative worth of each agency—where each is strong, and each is weak. In prescribing treatment it is necessary to know to what institutions one can best direct the incapacitated—what agency can best train the blind, or the mentally defective; what agency can care best for the homeless aged; what is the best boarding home for children; and so forth. If there are several institutions which are doing the same form of social work in about the same way, the volunteer must judge which will be better able to meet the needs of the incapacitated, always in the light of the incapacitated's particular needs, temperament, religious beliefs, racial traditions. The volunteer should visit every welfare agency in his city and county, and make the personal acquaintance of some of the workers in each institution as far as possible.

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18. **The psychology of social work as a profession.** The social worker should know the psychology of his occupation, that is, the ways in which social work exerts an influence upon his mental habits. It is easy for the social worker to keep his eyes so close to individual cases that the deep-seated causes are not observed. Likewise, methods of fundamental amelioration receive no consideration. In helping the incapacitated the worker should keep continually in mind the large societary picture, and especially its bright side. It is possible for the worker to take his work so seriously that he gets lost in the pathological side of life. Poverty, vice, crime, maladjustments of all kinds, and other pathological conditions may pull the worker into a current of social slime. In this connection the importance of a sound sociological background is self-evident. Sociology, which is the scientific study of group phenomena, and which considers the laws of sound social processes and normal personal growth, provides the social worker with the perspective which he needs in order that he may not become discouraged, and that he may direct the incapacitated safely across the currents of misfortune to the high ground of self-efficiency and respect as well as of social usefulness.

The volunteer social worker will observe the distinction between case work and social reform. Case work is only one avenue of securing social amelioration; it is individual, particularistic, and minute in character, and its psychological effect upon the worker is likewise particularistic. Its complement is social reform or mass procedure, such as social legislation. By utilizing legal enactments this latter method, if supported by an educated public opinion, may abolish social nuisances in an entire state or nation at a single stroke.

Social case work gives concrete experience and affords warm human contacts; social reform is general, dealing primarily with groups rather than with individuals. By seeing life from the standpoint of its general needs, social reformers are able to catch the meaning of large social movements; the case worker knows life in its individual aspects and hence is an authority which the reformer must frequently consult. The social reformer lifts his eyes to the future; the case worker has his eyes bent on the present, on today's particular opportunity. Together, hand in hand, each may supply what the other lacks, and give to social progress a multiplied impetus.

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